

**AUGUSTA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY
POLICY COMMITTEE
ROOM 802, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, AUGUSTA, GEORGIA
THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2004, 11:00 A.M.**

Voting Members present: ☐

Fred Cavanaugh, Mayor of Aiken - **Chairman**
Ronnie Hutto (representing Ron Cross, Chairman
Columbia Co. Commission - **Vice-Chairman**)
Bob Young, Mayor of Augusta
Chuck Smith (representing Ronnie Young,
Chairman Aiken County Council)
Matthew Fowler (representing GA DOT
Commissioner)
Brian Fulmer (representing D. H. Freeman, SC
DOT State Highway Engineer)

Voting Members absent:

Wayne Benson, Mayor of Burnettsville
Col. Robert Henderson, Fort Gordon

Lark Jones, Mayor of North Augusta)
Dennis Trudeau, Mayor of Grovetown

Others Present (N = Nonvoting Member) ☐

Augusta-Richmond Co. Planning Commission

George Patty (N)
Paul DeCamp
Lynn Russell
Sangeetha Rao
Juriah Lewis

City of Aiken

Ed Evans

SC DOT

Machael Peterson

FHWA

Chetna Dixon, SC

City of Augusta

Barbara Cato
Travis Davidson

GA DOT

Bill Kuhlke
Christa McKinney
Beth Edmiston
Radney Simpson

Other

JC Lexow, Aiken Standard
Guy Patin, WGAC
Mike Petchenik, WAGT

1. Consider approval of the minutes of the Policy Committee held on December 4, 2003.

Mr. Smith moved to approve the December minutes as sent out. Mr. Fowler seconded the motion to approve the minutes. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. Status of Project Reports:

(a) Georgia Highways

Ms. Christa McKinney presented this item. A handout was distributed to the Committee members

- The bridge replacement @ Crawford Creek project (0000809) is scheduled to be let in April 2004.
- Plans are 100% complete on the SR 56 @ New Goshen Road intersection improvement project (0001419). This project is scheduled to be let in April 2004.
- SR 56 from Old Waynesboro Road to Doug Barnard Parkway widening project has been added to the work program.

(b) South Carolina Highways

Ms. Peterson presented this item. A handout was distributed to the Committee members.

- There are no significant changes on Phase I of the Palmetto Parkway (Bobby Jones Expressway) project. The project is continuing smoothly and is 85% complete. The completion date is June 2004.
- Additional funding for Phase II of the Palmetto Parkway has to be secured to pay for construction.
- SC 118 Bypass from SC 19 to US 78 - construction is approximately 82% complete and should be completed by April 2004. This project is now in the “liquidated damages” stage where the contractor will have to start paying for each day the project is not completed.
- Georgia Avenue Extension from Georgia Avenue to Riverside Blvd was advertised for professional services on January 5, 2004 edition of the South Carolina Business Opportunities. The scope of the project was revised to include the North Augusta Riverfront Extensions. Letters of interest and consultant qualification were submitted to the department and a selection has been made. The department is in the process of negotiating the final contract and it is anticipated that preliminary design activities will begin in March.

(c) Augusta Public Transit

Ms. Cato presented this item. Three buses are scheduled for delivery on May 1, 2004. Augusta is negotiating with Kmart to lease approximately 600 square feet to install a larger bus shelter. Bus routes will be altered to accommodate a change in headway time for this bus stop to thirty minutes instead of forty minutes.

(d) Aiken County Transit

No one was present to present this item. Ms. Cato informed the Committee that ridership on the North Augusta – Augusta bus route is stable but not as high as expected. Once the Best Friend Express changes its route to accommodate this stop, ridership is expected to rise.

3. Consider recommendation to approve an amendment to the FY 2004 Unified Planning Work Program by reducing the South Carolina portion of FY 03 Special Studies funds by \$62,500

and increasing the FY 04 Special Studies work element by \$62,500. These funds would, as proposed, fund part of the North Augusta Access Management Study.

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. This is basically a housekeeping item. Funding will be rolled forward to help pay for the North Augusta Access Management Study, which is almost complete.

Mr. Smith moved to approve the amendments as presented above. Mr. Hutto seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Consider recommendation to approve the final FY 2005 Unified Planning Work Program (see attached).

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. The UPWP is being finalized for the next fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2004 and ending June 30, 2005. A summary of the proposed work elements and budget sheet was distributed with the agenda. This outlines all the work elements that state and local planning partners will be working on during FY 05. The summaries and budget amounts are essentially unchanged from the draft presented in December with the exception of a couple Special Studies projects have been added in the City of Aiken portion of the Study Area.

Mr. Evans explained that the two Aiken studies are for possible connectors routes between Powder House to Whiskey Road. One of the studies would develop a concept for at least one east-west connector between Whiskey and Powderhouse Road. The second report would develop a concept for and a north-south connector road parallel to Whiskey Road. The study would determine possible alternative route centerlines. The studies would not include any preliminary engineering for the projects. The estimated cost for the Whiskey/ Powderhouse Road Connector Study would be \$40,000 (\$32,000 PL and \$8,000 City of Aiken local match), and the estimated cost of the North/ South Connector Road Study would be \$50,000 (\$40,000 PL and \$10,000 City of Aiken local match). A consultant will be hired to prepare these studies to help alleviate traffic on Whiskey Road.

Mr. Young asked if a place holder is needed for the Rail relocation planning funds (i.e. the \$2.0 million earmark). These funds will be included in the upcoming FY 05-07 Transportation Improvement Program, and in the Long Range Transportation Plan update (currently underway).

Mr. Fowler moved and Mr. Smith seconded the motion to approve the final FY 2005 UPWP. The motion was approved unanimously.

5. Consider a recommendation to add a project to the ARTS Long Range Transportation Plan:

a) SR 56/Mike Padgett Highway - add a 5th lane from Old Waynesboro Road to New Savannah Road / Doug Barnard Parkway.

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. The GA DOT District Office requested this project due to concerns voiced by property owners, residents and industries along a three-mile section of Highway 56 between Old Waynesboro Road and Doug Barnard Parkway. There have been fatalities along this section of Highway 56 (Mike Padgett Hwy.). The intersection improvement project at Goshen Road will be let for bids in the near future. North and south of this section, Highway 56 is five lanes, except for a four-lane, 0.67-mile section from Southern Glassine Rd. (CR 885) south to Bennock Mill Rd. (CR 17).

Correspondence from another manufacturing plant located near this four-lane section indicates one employee was killed and another injured in separate accidents. GA DOT has developed a preliminary cost estimate for the widening of the three-mile section of Highway 56 between Old Waynesboro Road and Doug Barnard Parkway. At their last meeting the TCC and CAC recommended that this project be added to the Long Range Plan and that the termini are extended to include the four-lane, 0.67-mile section from Southern Glassine Rd. (CR 885) south to Bennock Mill Rd. (CR 17).

Mr. Young moved to approve this amendment to the Long Range Plan. Mr. Hutto seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

6. Consider approving the South Carolina portion of the Draft FY 05-07 Transportation Improvement Program (see attached)

Mr. Fulmer presented this item. The reauthorization of the Federal Transportation Program is still being considered. TEA-21 was scheduled to be renewed last year. In order to meet scheduled deadlines, SC DOT has taken the current TIP and drafted a three year program (FY 2005-07) with the current funding levels. Once the new transportation bill is enacted changes can be made to the TIP.

Mr. Smith moved to approve the South Carolina portion of the draft FY 05 TIP. Mr. Hutto seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

7. Early Action Compact - An Air Quality Initiative

(a) Aiken County

No one was available to present this item.

(b) Richmond County

Ms. Rao presented this item. On December 31, 2003 Georgia EPA sent US EPA a six-month progress report on the Augusta Early Action Compact (EAC). EPD and the city have thus far met every milestone in the EAC. EPA will announce 8-hour ozone nonattainment designations on April 15th. Aiken and Richmond Counties are expected to be designated as attainment areas, meaning that they meet the federal air quality standards for ozone.

8. Update on Special Studies Projects

(a) Whiskey Rd. - Silver Bluff Rd. Connector Study

Mr. Cavanaugh presented this item. The nine-member committee, including representatives from the City of Aiken Council, Aiken County and the general public, is evaluating the best route to recommend. Two additional meetings will be necessary before a final decision is made.

(b) North Augusta Access Management Study

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. There are no significant changes since the last update. Work is nearing completion. This study will be incorporated in the local ordinances once adopted.

(c) Columbia County Transportation Study

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. A draft of the final report is being reviewed by Georgia DOT and Columbia County. As the document is finalized several identified projects will be forwarded to the ARTS for recommendation to include in the Long Range Plan and Transportation Improvement Program.

(d) ARTS Long Range Transportation Plan

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. This project will entail an update to the Long Range Transportation Plan for the entire region. The contractor URS has been working on background information for a couple months. The first round of public meetings is scheduled for April 12 & 13, 2004. There will be one meeting on the 12th from 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM at the Columbia County Government Complex. Two meetings on will be held on the 13th - one from 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM in Aiken, and another at the Augusta-Richmond County Civic Center from 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

George A. Patty
Project Director